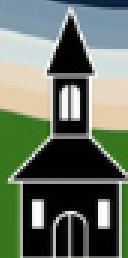
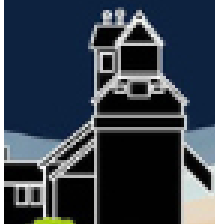
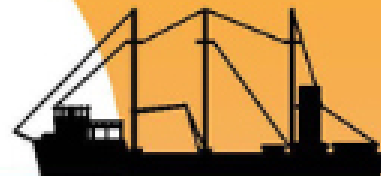


# The Making of Milwaukee

Milwaukee is your city



**ELEMENTARY  
CURRICULUM  
INTRODUCTION**  
Grades 3-5  
June 2026





# The Making of Milwaukee

Dear Teachers,

We are pleased to present this adventurous and updated elementary curriculum to accompany *The Making of Milwaukee* film series produced by Milwaukee PBS. This curriculum, grades 3-5, has been enhanced and updated to align with the current Wisconsin State Social Studies Standards, C3 Framework, and current technology and local resources.

*The Making of Milwaukee* curriculum is organized into the following seven historical themed units that align with *The Making of Milwaukee* video chapters: **Early Natives and Settlers, Coming to Milwaukee, Working in Milwaukee, Local Government and Leadership, Leadership and Growth, Challenges in the City, The Next Chapter**

Each historical theme/unit includes learning activities that can be used as single lessons or as part of an in-depth inquiry. Each lesson series begins with My Milwaukee Journal. This allows students to take notes while watching a *The Making of Milwaukee* video chapter as well as participate in the learning experience from a personal perspective. Additional meaningful lessons follow within each unit as teachers lead students through an inquiry into the geographical, historical, cultural, economic, and political science factors that represent *The Making of Milwaukee*. We hope that by actively engaging in the learning activities, students will realize they are an integral part of Milwaukee, that they, too, are *Making Milwaukee*.

***The Making of Milwaukee* Elementary Curriculum Author  
Kaela Zielinski, Milwaukee Public Schools**

***The Making of Milwaukee* Curriculum Team**

Ben Barbera, Executive Director & President, Milwaukee County Historical Society  
Dr. Beverly Cross, Distinguished Chair of Urban Education, Memphis University  
Jennie Ekstein, Social Studies Specialist, Milwaukee Public Schools  
Mary Hinderliter, Volunteer Editor, Milwaukee County Historical Society  
Christian Jensen, Educator, Milwaukee County Historical Society  
Mary Jo Knapp, Educational Director, Milwaukee County Historical Society  
Dr. James Marten, Retired Professor and Editor, Marquette University  
Dr. Linda Tiezzi Waldera, Retired MPS & UW-Milwaukee Educator

**John Gurda, Historian & Author of *The Making of Milwaukee* book  
and Milwaukee PBS series**

**Milwaukee PBS**

Carole Burns, Digital Content Coordinator  
Kristin Pelisek, Page Production  
Cameron Risher, Chief Marketing Officer



# The Making of Milwaukee

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

**The Making of Milwaukee (MoM) Film Series:** MoM = *The Making of Milwaukee*

This chronological film series, produced by Milwaukee PBS, aligns with John Gurda's book of the same name. The film series includes 18 video chapters, each approximately 15-30 minutes long. Not all videos are elementary appropriate and suggested minutes and sections of the videos are in the lesson plans. The curriculum was written to be used with or without the videos.

Free streaming access for educators is provided by Milwaukee PBS. We are grateful!

**Teacher's Choice/Flexibility:** The lessons created for the elementary *The Making of Milwaukee* curriculum appear sequential. However, the ultimate decision regarding the number and order of the learning activities taught belongs to the teacher. It will also be your responsibility to decide grade level appropriateness within the elementary classroom.

**Primary Sources and Inquiry:** You will not find answer keys in this curriculum. We want students to engage in inquiry in a way that may not allow for correct answers. The ability to use primary and secondary sources, images, and records helps us to analyze history. We understand there may be a correct answer but, in some cases, we may never know, and some students may interpret documents in ways you may not have. Primary sources were recorded exactly as they were. You may find misspellings, phrases not used, or controversial opinions. Please read notes to address these with students.

**Image Library:** Some learning activities include photos, and some refer you to *The Making of Milwaukee* Image Library. Permission has been granted by various historical organizations so that all Image Library pictures can be downloaded for use in student work or teacher presentations. Perusing old photographs promotes questioning and inquiry into Milwaukee's history. Have students look and examine photos closely and attend to photo details. Pictures are worth 1,000 words!

**Assessment:** Assessment is a vital tool for teaching and learning. Please look carefully at the learning intentions for each lesson and make that intention clear to students. Choose and adapt an assessment process/tool approved by your school district that aligns with the intention.

**Integration:** We encourage you to integrate Milwaukee history into all subject areas. We especially note that the Language Arts components of researching, notetaking, reading, writing, and speaking are critical to successful inquiry processes.

**WHEN POSSIBLE, FIND WAYS to GET STUDENTS OUT into their COMMUNITY!  
or BRING the COMMUNITY into the CLASSROOM!  
HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP a SENSE of BELONGING, a SENSE of PLACE, a SENSE that they, too,  
ARE MAKING Milwaukee!**



# The Making of Milwaukee

## VIEWING *The Making of Milwaukee* (MoM) VIDEOS

**Teachers:** Watch the video chapter before showing students to make professional decisions about significant concepts, vocabulary, questions to pose, and places to pause for active student participation and inquiry. Please note the times and minutes highlighted in some videos, some videos are not intended for students to watch in its entirety.

### BEFORE VIEWING:

- Ensure students have the **My Milwaukee Journal** notetaking page or similar doodle page available.
- Activate prior knowledge: use title, topics, and questioning strategies.
- Provide a purpose for watching the video.
- Share Learning Intention.
- Share highlighted vocabulary.
- Forecast the discussion and inquiry questions that are available at the beginning of each learning activity.
- Share what you found most interesting with students.

### DURING VIEWING: **PAUSE OFTEN!**

- Give students time to process certain video segments.
- Activate the **Watch-Think-Write/Draw** strategy.
- Watch a video segment, pause, pose questions, and discuss.
- Have students take notes or draw, then discuss what they saw with classmates. (*Students notice different things.*)

### AFTER VIEWING:

- Pose open-ended, analytical and or essential questions to prompt a class discussion.
- Have students clarify, revise, and complete their notetaking.
- Encourage students to form questions they have about what they've seen or write an “*I wonder*” statement.
- Use additional learning activities within *The Making of Milwaukee* curriculum to further students' learning and inquiries.

**All Video Chapters are located on the Milwaukee PBS Website.**

**Visit: [MilwaukeePBS.org/MakingOfMilwaukee](https://www.milwaukeepbs.org/makingofmilwaukee)**



# The Making of Milwaukee

## Curriculum Flexibility

This curriculum was developed for teachers to use in many ways. We encourage you to use this in your classroom in a way that works best for your students. This curriculum can be used from start to finish in line with the chronological order of *The Making of Milwaukee* videos and history. Teachers can also use components of the curriculum to supplement learning throughout the year. Each unit has been developed around a central theme and includes several lessons and activities that can be used together or separately. Unique graphic headers at the top of the page will help to indicate what component it is.

## Included Curriculum Components

- **Unit overviews:** video outlines, unit inquiry questions, and Wisconsin State Social Studies Standards.
- **Lesson introductions:** learning goals, objectives, discussion questions, vocabulary, and additional resources.
- **Lesson procedures for educators:** educator notes, descriptions of activities included in lesson.
- ***The Making Milwaukee* video notes:** a place for students to write, sketch, and document what they see and hear when they are viewing the videos.
- **My Milwaukee Journal pages:** a place for students to think critically about their lives, city, and connections to Milwaukee.
- **Student activity pages:** activities to connect students to learning that include primary sources, readings, and deeper historical content. These activities will help students draw conclusions to the inquiry questions at the beginning of the unit.
- **Milwaukee Biographies:** these include historical figures in Milwaukee history that have contributed to the history of Milwaukee.
- **Literature Connections:** An updated list of books that can be used as a read aloud, research companions, or to supplement your classroom library. Almost all books can be found in the Milwaukee County Federated Library system (MPL County Cat) or The Milwaukee Public Library (MPL).